

September 16, 2005



Senate Hispanic Briefing Room

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Office of Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D.

IN THE NEWS

SENATOR FRIST WELCOMES COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT URIBE TO THE US SENATE

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D., welcomed the President of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe and his delegation to the United States Senate. The Senator expressed his deep appreciation for the strong and enduring partnership between the United States and Colombia, and his commitment to making them even stronger.

Frist thanked President Uribe for his government's cooperation on joint US-Colombia counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics initiatives including all the work done on Plan Colombia. President Uribe discussed his country's efforts to assist Americans affected by Hurricane Katrina. President Uribe discussed his country's continuing his fight against terrorism, the importance of free trade, and of bringing criminals and terrorists to justice. "President Uribe is providing Colombia with strong leadership. His courage and vision are promoting growth, stability, and democracy in our hemisphere," said Senator Frist.

The issues discussed in the meeting in the nation's Capitol with Senate leaders from both parties focused on cooperation on counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics initiatives, trade, and regional issues affecting Colombia and its neighbors. The visit reflects the deep bonds and strength of U.S.-Colombian relations, as well as the deepening partnership of the two countries in advancing democracy, prosperity, and security for the Americas.

THIS WEEK

U.S. Senators Bill Frist, M.D. (R-TN), Senator Michael Enzi (R-WY), Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Senator John Warner (R-VA) today announced that the Higher Education Reauthorization Act contains a new mandatory spending program to provide additional financial assistance to low-income students who major in mathematics, science, technology, engineering and foreign languages critical to national security.

The "Science and Math Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grant" provides eligible low-income students up to \$1500 per year during their third and fourth years of study at a higher education institution. To be eligible for a SMART Grant, a student must qualify for a Federal Pell Grant and enroll in an eligible postsecondary academic program, as determined by the Secretary of Education.

"Sustaining America's competitive edge in the global economy demands a new generation of well-trained scientists and engineers to find cures, create faster microchips and develop innovative technologies," said **Frist**. "America's colleges and universities are not producing enough math, science, and engineering graduates to meet our nation's growing economic and national security needs. Today's committee action will offer students from underserved communities meaningful incentives to pursue 21st century jobs that will generate growth and retain America's position as a global leader in science and technology. I'm pleased by today's first step, and hope to see more money allocated to this much needed program as we move forward."

The National SMART Grant is authorized at \$1 billion over five years, or \$200 million during each fiscal year, under S. 1614, the Higher Education Reauthorization Act. The program includes an optional matching component whereby funds from private sources, namely the business community, may provide additional assistance to eligible students.

SENATOR FRIST CELEBRATES HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the month-long celebration beginning today, honoring the heritage of Hispanic Americans. Nearly 40 years ago, Congress authorized President Lyndon Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week. Two decades later, President George H. W. Bush expanded the celebration to 4 weeks. National Hispanic Heritage Month was born.

Every year, we set aside a month to pay special regard to the contributions of Hispanic Americans. Over the centuries, Hispanic-Americans have profoundly affected the course of American history. Their influence predates the birth of our nation, tracing back to the first footsteps of the Spanish explorers, more than 400 years today. De Soto and his men were the first to discover the mighty Mississippi. Coronado's expedition unearthed the Grand Canyon. De Anza blazed a rail from Mexico to California's Pacific Coast.

Since the dawn of the early explorers, millions of men and women—from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central America, South America, and Spain—have continued the tradition of settling in America. They've come in search of freedom, peace and prosperity, and they've given far more than they sought. Through the ages, Hispanic Americans have left an indelible mark on the history, the culture, and the values of our nation.

Some names stand out: David Barkley—the first Hispanic American to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. Barkley voluntarily swam the frosty Meuse River in France during World War I to gather information behind enemy lines. He gave his life for our country, drowning on his swim back to land.

Luis Alvarez, a Nobel Prize recipient who revolutionized the safety of air travel by inventing the ground-controlled radar system for aircraft landings. Ellen Ochoa, the world's first Hispanic American astronaut.

Or Sara Martinez Tucker, who I met at a dinner I recently hosted. A native of Laredo, Sara worked her way up from humble beginnings to become the first Hispanic female to hold an executive position at AT&T. Time Magazine recently named her one of the top 25 most influential Hispanic Americans. But most important is what she's done to help other Hispanic-Americans realize their dreams.

David Barkley, Luis Alvarez, Ellen Ochoa, Sara Martinez Tucker, Alex Rodriguez, Nancy Lopez, Richard Serra, Rita Hayworth, Cesar Chavez, Alberto Gonzalez. Entrepreneurs, public servants, athletes, artists, philanthropists, scientists, scholars, all have contributed to the rich fabric of American culture. We are a more vibrant nation for it.

These names stand out, but there are many others large and small, who move America forward every day. They are the countless heroes who've fought in our wars, who work in our hospitals, who teach in our schools, and who serve in our government.

Many have come to America, with a simple hope of a better life, and through hard work they've achieved that goal. We honor their character, determination, enduring optimism. It is the spirit of the American character, which gives flight to the American dream, and has fueled the progress of a great nation.

Today, as we begin a month-long celebration of Hispanic Heritage, I join with all Americans in recognizing the invaluable role of Hispanic Americans in shaping and enriching these united states.

BILL FRIST, Remark
Senate Floor , September 15, 2005



Join The Frist Senate
Hispanic Leadership Team

We need individuals like you to help us get the message out. Please e-mail me at noe_garcia@frist.senate.gov if you are ready to join the FRIST TEAM.